

Resist and Hope

30 authors under 30 from 30 countries

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Backcover

With authoritarianism on the rise, extremism and conflict gain ground, and the planet suffers. It is becoming increasingly difficult to see a way forward. In this context, how can we resist – and how can we hope?

This issue gives a voice to 30 young authors, all under the age of 30, living in 30 different countries. From the small details of everyday life to grand, boundless dreams, their writings tell us where their resistance lies and how they live out their hopes.

It is these voices – from Nigeria and Ukraine, Afghanistan and Brazil, Palestine and Chile, Singapore and Guatemala... – that we invite you to engage with, giving us a glimpse of wonder.

An anthology

Foreword by Karim Kattan

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It is never easy to organise texts in an anthology. Those presented here are, of course, linked by the same overarching theme – resistance and hope – yet they nevertheless demonstrate a wide variety of approaches and perspectives.

The groups we have formed are therefore merely indicative; we have not given them titles, so as not to reinforce the categorisation of the texts – thus leaving them open to interpretation.

At most, one might say that the first text in each section serves as an introduction to the ‘theme’, whilst the last text provides a transition to the next section, ensuring continuity in the reading experience. The structure we propose is based on the internal dynamics of the texts themselves.

Of course, this is not a ranking – this order of appearance simply reflects a consensus amongst the co-editors, who remain aware of its arbitrariness and subjectivity.

As regards the formatting of the texts, we have taken care to respect the authors’ own preferences. This volume does not seek to standardise the writings presented, either in content or in form.

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Note 1: whilst a general reading in no way prevents the words from resonating within us, the context in which these works were written is sometimes important for grasping their full depth.

Note 2: Of all the submissions received that met the call for papers, only one could not be published – it depicted, in very graphic terms, a ‘bromantic’ scene between Elon Musk and Donald Trump, which had been edited and embellished repeatedly by AI, to the point of absurdity. Although quite funny and inventive, this piece nevertheless had an extremely pronounced ‘carnal’ nature (which spared no anatomical detail) that would have been unwelcome to some of the co-authors – which we verified before making our decision. Censorship is always painful, but we could not ignore the fact that the risk of being compromised ‘by association’ exists in certain geographical areas and that, above all, we must not compromise anyone’s safety. This position was fully understood by the author of the unpublished text, whom we thank wholeheartedly for her acceptance and for her inventive and surprising work.

Foreword

They are still here

Karim Kattan, Palestine/France

Thirty writers have penned thirty texts.

It turns out that they are all under thirty, but they do not constitute a generation.

Some are younger, others older. Some texts are more-or-less 'mature'. By 'mature', I certainly do not mean a judgement on quality. What I mean is that they have been shaped by lived experience and its challenges, with varying degrees of intensity and interval, and that they therefore relate to these concepts (hope and resistance) with varying confidence. They come from diverse and shifting contexts of violence, sometimes still at home, sometimes in exile, sometimes in a state of limbo.

Whilst some take these terms seriously, others immediately express unease at their very mention. Resist what? How? And hope – a term all too often laden with theological connotations – how could it even be possible? What can a text do against brutality? Resistance and hope: are they hackneyed and depoliticised ideas, or genuine driving forces for a world yet to come?

This is what they offer: thirty ways of reflecting on ourselves in this world full of rebuttals.

These texts ask of us something that is by no means simple: our full and undivided attention. A willingness to listen – that is to say, the ability to read them on their own terms.

For me, hope —or rather 'ardent joy', to borrow two terms gleaned from these pages— lies in what connects all these texts: the network of writers, translators and publishers; this global map that unfolds here. It is here that, to borrow yet another term found in these texts, a word that surprised me because it seems so outdated and yet is so magnificently apt, a form of bravery comes into play.

The bravery of these writers.

In these pages we shall read all manner of texts: some emerging from the 'abyss of darkness', others from realities that are more-or-less forgiving. Testimonies, analyses, projections, works of fiction, poems, and sometimes even manifestos. Texts that stand 'on the edge of the world', in their own words, and which, for that very reason, become its beating heart. For the true heart of the world often lies in what we think of as its periphery; the peripheries are the true centre, as we see here, and what we call the centre is but a moribund knot.

I repeat 'world' deliberately.

What first struck me were the recurring words. The almost systematic reference to 'fascism', which, on its own, sums up our era and its fears. But also, other terms that recur

like questions: 'cynical', 'naive'. 'Am I one or the other?' these writers, grappling with this 'world', seem to ask themselves.

And finally, 'world': a word they use constantly. Perhaps it appears in every single text without exception. It is sometimes accompanied by a verb: 'save'. To save the world.

They write, across all these different realities, from generations born into a sense of urgency and an awareness of possible disappearance. Generations grappling with brutality: persecution, capitulation; the police, governments, theocrats, perpetrators of genocide, technocrats, billionaires. They feel it, they know it, and they see everything that contributes to the boundless and irreparable destruction of our societies and our planet.

Concerned with what they call the 'world'—which takes shape in multiple and shifting structures— these texts constantly return to the same question, to that thing left hanging in the form of a question mark. In essays, novels, short stories, analysis and poetry —and in fluid, shifting forms— they re-enact what they imagine to be the link between their texts, their practice, and this world we inhabit whilst destroying it.

The nature of reality today is such that horror is no longer confined: it is everywhere, not just amongst those who were already accustomed to it. It has infiltrated spaces that thought themselves immune. It has become —to use that other often-used term— universal, in a world locked down by monopolies, authoritarianism, colonialism and theocracies.

But despite the pessimism of some and the optimism of others, these texts assert, by their very existence, that violence can neither silence them nor subdue them. As one of them puts it, regarding the experience of migration: here is a 'tribe of lighthouses charting unknown seas'.

This is one of the images that stays with me when defining this collection of resistance. Ultimately, against all odds, what seems to me to best embody this issue is the idea of attentive and luminous presences.

So here are these texts in existence and, dare I say, thanks to the editorial work, in co-existence: amongst themselves and with us. Undertaking this work of collecting voices from our planet is, in itself, to propose an imagination of resistance, a vision of the world. For that is what the world is: the sum of our care for it and of our relationships with one another. The world is made up of the beacons that illuminate it and which, together, form a people and a community.

They are here.

They are always there: these beacons, these existences, this community on the lookout for another world in the making.

Whether or not that world comes to be, whether or not we fail, these texts will prove that it was possible to imagine it.